

# The Managed Career of the Reverend Charles Moore of Stirling

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Although Moderatism was politically the strongest force in the Scottish church from 1725 until the end of the eighteenth century, it is customary to associate its strength with the extroverted personalities of those who dominated the church and its assemblies from mid-century on — Principal William Robertson of the University of Edinburgh, Alexander Carlyle, Hugh Blair, and their circle. Yet their liberal and compromising policy showed itself earlier in the century, particularly during the bitter debates over patronage that brought on the secession of 1733, in the relatively mild censure of Professor John Simson after more than a decade of trials for suspiciously unorthodox instruction at the University of Glasgow, and in the unfortunate quarrel over *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. In these divisive instances, however, the tendency is to recall those enthusiasts whose principles lost out — Thomas Boston, Ralph Erskine and his brother Ebenezer, and Robert Wodrow — rather than the Moderates of that time whose strategy survived.

One church historian, decidedly partial to the Evangelicals, sees strong differences between the later and more famous Moderates first-named and the generation of mild and tolerant ministers who preceded them. "The Older Moderates", he says, "had no liking for Calvinism. Their theological views were deeply tinged with Deism, and their attachment to the full contents of the evangel was loose and cold. Yet they were cultured, urbane, and serious-minded men of high intellectual attainments, and were generally correct in their morals. . . . The New Moderates who appeared in 1750 were of an entirely different stamp."<sup>1</sup>

The later Moderates are easier to identify; many became famous for their taste in theatre, their hospitality, their secular friends, and their literary achievement. Who, by contrast, were the early Moderates of the Scottish church? Two recent historians single out William Hamilton (1669-1732), professor of divinity at the University of Edinburgh from 1709 to 1731; and Dr Henry R. Sefton suggests that all the students of Hamilton might well qualify as early Moderates, particularly Robert Wallace (1697-1771), Patrick Cuming (1695-1776), William Wishart the younger (d. 1753), his brother George (1703-1786), James Oswald (1703-

1 D. Maclean, *Aspects of Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh, 1927), 25-26.

1786), and William Leechman (1706-1785).<sup>2</sup> Several of these figures were influential: Patrick Cuming was professor of church history at Edinburgh and on three occasions was moderator of the General Assembly; Robert Wallace was moderator of the General Assembly in 1743; William Wishart became principal at Edinburgh in 1736; and Leechman was named professor of divinity at Glasgow in 1742 and principal there in 1761. Their common mentor, William Hamilton, was outstanding in this controversial period for the mildness of his manners, his "sceptical" mode of thought and instruction, and his reluctance to take issue with opposing theological views. His only published sermon, according to Dr Sefton, shows him gentle, reasonable, and apologetic, rather than dogmatic.<sup>3</sup> James Oswald said that Hamilton taught his students "a liberal manner of thinking on all subjects", but Robert Wodrow, who scrupulously monitored the doctrinal purity of the church in those days, thought that Hamilton and his students wandered dangerously from orthodoxy on many occasions. That Hamilton kept in regular touch with both Anglican and dissenting divines was no strong recommendation; Wodrow further resented Hamilton's more pervasive influence in 1731 "among the young Ministers of the Church" than that of the older men closer in spirit to the Covenant. In another instance Wodrow noted that "the students and preachers that are most recommended by him, and most students that have been under his lessons for some years, are very much off the principles of this Church". Oswald, writing much later, disagreed. Hamilton's students, he recalled, were "not the flaming superficial gentlemen who having picked up somewhat of the English language, can read another's sermons with a becoming grace — but such as had drawn their knowledge from the sources of ancient learning and the Scriptures in their original language and who by a gravity and decorum of behaviour did command the religion they taught".<sup>4</sup>

But beyond Hamilton and the Wisharts, who were the Moderate ministers in the smaller establishments, and how did they fare with their congregations? Wodrow mentions William Armstrong of Canonbie, John Taylor of Alloa, and Archibald Gibson of Dunblane whom he suspected of being Moderates; little is known of them. Another candidate, perhaps even less known, is

2 A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843* (Edinburgh, 1973), 22; H. R. Sefton, "The Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1962), 13.

3 *Early Development of Moderatism*, 38.

4 R. Wodrow, *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1843), iv, 213; J. Oswald, *Letters Concerning the Present State of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1767), 23, cited in Sefton, "Moderates", 29.

the Reverend Charles Moore of Stirling (c. 1683-1736), who belonged to the party favouring compromise, unity, and peace in the church. This will be shown not by his sermons, no examples of which have survived, but by his education, his temperament, his powerful friends, and the difficulties attending his settlements. The facts of his career may help shed some light on the circumstances of other "cultured, urbane, and serious-minded men of high intellectual attainments" who have since been forgotten. His career is an illuminating example of the difficulties arising wherever a minister of a possible liberal turn of mind is presented by an influential political figure to a congregation and heritors of a more traditional or popular temper.

Charles Moore is usually remembered for his distinguished descendants. His only surviving son, Dr John Moore (1729-1802), was a well-known physician, traveller, and novelist, the first biographer of Tobias Smollett, and a correspondent of Robert Burns. The minister's more celebrated grandchildren include Sir John Moore (1761-1809), the hero of Corunna; Dr James Carrick Moore (1762-1860), who with Edward Jenner popularised smallpox vaccination in the British Isles; and Sir Graham Moore (1764-1843), a naval hero from the Napoleonic wars. A great-grandchild was Sir Charles Macintosh (1766-1843), the chemist. But the minister's roots are comparatively obscure.

Charles Moore's father had been a captain in King William's army in Ireland and for his services received a grant of land in County Armagh where he was already settled. His father can be traced further to Captain Alexander Mure, a younger son of Sir William Mure of Rowallan (1594-1647);<sup>5</sup> this Alexander Mure, like the Mures in Ayr, distinguished himself for his strong presbyterian sympathies, losing his life in battle in 1649; his family gave their allegiance early to Clan Campbell and the Marquis of Argyll,<sup>6</sup> which bond continued between the Moores and Argylls for another 100 years. It would appear therefore that while the roots of the family were in Ayrshire, its males had been involved with military affairs in Ireland several times in the seventeenth century. Charles Moore is the only known minister.

Nothing is known of the minister's youth. Sir John said that his grandfather, a younger son, "was sent over to Scotland to be educated Amongst his father's relations".<sup>7</sup> Chief among these were Lady Jane Mure of Rowallen, daughter of William Mure of Rowallen (d. 1724) and second wife to the first Earl of Glasgow (d. 1733). This protection was continued by their daughter Jane, styled "heiress of Rowallen", who in 1720 married General Sir

<sup>5</sup> *Records of the Carrick Moore Family*, ed. G. Heath (Cobham, 1912), 3.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Mr Hugh Moore of El Monte, California, for this information.

<sup>7</sup> British Library Add. MSS., 57321.



James Campbell of Lawers (1667-1745), thus reinforcing the strong ties between Clan Campbell and the Mures.<sup>8</sup>

Moore was one of many young men admitted to the University of Glasgow from Northern Ireland specifically to be prepared for the ministry of the Irish Presbyterian Church. "Carolus Moore, Hibernus" appears in the matriculation albums of Glasgow for February 1702 under Gershom Carmichael, the authority on the natural philosophers Grotius and Puffendorf, and one of the most popular regents with students at that time.<sup>9</sup> Whether Moore intended to return to his birthplace after his education is uncertain; there were shortages in pulpits on either side of the Irish Sea.<sup>10</sup> After some unspecified years at Glasgow, he may have become a tutor in some family; more likely he went to the Netherlands for further study.<sup>11</sup> He cannot be located again until 1709, when his name appears on handwritten class list of students of divinity under William Hamilton.<sup>12</sup>

The association with Hamilton is significant, of course, because it helps define the young minister's theological temperament. Students of the professor of divinity at Edinburgh were introduced to a more open and objective style of thinking. Dr Sefton believes that Robert Wallace reflected Hamilton's method of thought when Wallace wrote:

"The Christian religion recommends yea enjoyns a full and impartial examination of the grounds of our faith and practice. . . . A man in seeking what he is to believe should not regard what any Church or Pope or assembly or convention has commanded but only what Christ and his

8 Dr John Moore, "Sketches of my own Birth and Certain Circumstances", a MS. letter composed for the rest of the family, dated c. 1800, in the possession of M. E. Heath, Surrey, and cited with permission.

9 *Munimenta Almae Universitatis Glasguensis*, ed. C. Innes, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1854), iii, 174. On Carmichael, see J. Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1909), 170, 196; and P. Stein, "Law and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland", in *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and R. Mitchison (Edinburgh, 1970), 153.

10 Henry Grey Graham says that in 1690 the church had borrowed some 60 clergymen from the church in Northern Ireland (*Social Life in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1950), 274).

11 C. Rogers, *The Book of Robert Burns*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1889), ii, 84. Neither album of matriculation for Leyden or Utrecht mentions Moore, nor does his name appear in the *Early Letters of Robert Wodrow, 1698-1709*, ed. L. W. Sharp (Edinburgh, 1937), mentioning students of divinity studying abroad. John Simson's name does not appear in the Utrecht album, but Wodrow indicates he was there; this suggests that Moore may have studied at a Dutch university without formally enrolling. According to Drummond, it was easier to travel from Scotland to the continent than south to London (*The Kirk and the Continent* (Edinburgh, 1956), 77). The list of Moore's personal library includes many foreign publications, which implies residence abroad (see his testament, S[cottish] R[ecord] O[ffice]), CC21/6/32.

12 Edinburgh University Library, MS. "Class Lists in Divinity". I am indebted to Mr C. P. Finlayson for this discovery.

Apostles have commanded. Although it has been the common practice of the Christian Church to form articles of faith to which their clergy at least have been required to subscribe, this is unreasonable, for it makes a truly impartial study of the Scriptures impossible."

So Wallace did not so much defend the creeds of the Scottish church as he based his faith on an acknowledgment that Christ was "a divinely authorised instructor" — veering close to Socinianism.<sup>13</sup>

A second attribute of those early Moderates was their particular tolerance for the opinions of others, even those views that might have bordered on the enthusiastic or heretical. Hamilton's son recalled his father teaching his students to be sympathetic to those of the church who suffered through the "killing times" and "at the conclusion of their course [in divinity] to maintain a tender and charitable respect towards their fathers in the church who had not enjoyed the means of acquiring the literature and liberality of sentiment so amply provided in the more happy times in which their own lot had been cast".<sup>14</sup> This explains why Hamilton was reluctant, as moderator of the General Assembly, to encourage charges against John Simson in 1727 and John Glass in 1728 — not because he sympathised with Simson's views as his enemies maintained, but because he believed it uncharitable to prosecute. Similarly his student Patrick Cuming later said: "We should suffer others to differ from us freely as we would be allowed to do from them, and never impute such Differences to Causes they refused or draw odious Consequences from them which they do not own. We should be so far from judging the Thought of Men, far from dooming them to eternal Damnation upon small and disputable Points: There is no greater Reproach to Reason than Bigotry."<sup>15</sup>

A third attribute of the early Moderates was their gentle manner, their prudence, and their mild disposition as a group — perhaps to a fault, Sefton suggests in his conclusions.<sup>16</sup> Fourthly, while these figures were distinguished by their piety and love of learning and Scripture, they were not above allying themselves with strong secular figures, particularly the Campbell interests, even though both the Duke of Argyll and his brother the Earl of Islay were intractable defenders of patronage in the church. Like

<sup>13</sup> Sefton, "Moderates", 48-49.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Hamilton in T. Somerville's *My Own Life and Times* (Edinburgh, 1861), 64, cited in Sefton, "Moderates", 29.

<sup>15</sup> "Sermon Preach'd at the Opening of the Synod of Dumfries, April 12th, 1726" (London, 1727), cited in Sefton, "Moderates", 55-56.

<sup>16</sup> "It is perhaps with their prudence with which one is most impatient. They are unduly anxious to preserve peace and quiet, to avoid open controversy, to prevent any breach with the secular authority. In a word, the Hamilton Moderates are *too moderate*." (Sefton, "Moderates", 218.)

the later Moderates, William Hamilton's men were unsympathetic to patronage, but acknowledged the act of 1712 regarding it, and for the peace of the church resolved their minds to live with it.<sup>17</sup>

The Reverend Charles Moore can be characterised by these attributes and, while he has much less claim to distinction than the Wisharts, Wallace, and Cuming, can be classified as another early Moderate in every way. The events of his life show him in constant conflict with the popular party of his church, and handling these crises in a manner which might be expected from one of Hamilton's students.

Moore was licensed by the Presbytery of Dunfermline in 1713 and for another two years supplied pulpits in Dunfermline and Edinburgh, presumably waiting for an opening. There may have been some problem in placing him because he was, while tall, a rather unprepossessing figure and, according to some nineteenth-century sources, "he had a tone, and a singing voice, which disfigured his countenance, both in preaching and prayer."<sup>18</sup> He was finally called, however, to the second charge of the quaint and formerly prosperous burgh of Culross in January of 1715, succeeding the pious George Mair, a friend of Ralph Erskine and Thomas Boston, and a non-juror in 1690.<sup>19</sup> John Moore said that his father received this call to Culross through the influence of Sir James Campbell of Lawers,<sup>20</sup> who was neither patron nor resident of the parish. Sir James, however, may have approached the patron, the Countess of Kincardine, or otherwise had pressure applied to Dunfermline Presbytery. This could explain some of the difficulty which Moore eventually had with the heritors, who would have preferred the choice of minister, in spite of the implications of the act of 1712, to be theirs. The minister of the first charge since 1708 was James Cuthbert, "a youth of great piety and ability", Wodrow recalled. Another non-juror, Cuthbert was a preacher of the Evangelical party and a close friend of Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline, whom he had known when the latter was tutor in the household of Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, the most influential heritor of Culross.<sup>21</sup>

Dunfermline Presbytery and its parishes were notorious at this time for their clashes between patrons and congregations over the choice of ministers. The patron of Dunfermline, with the co-operation of the heritors, had recently tried to present a candidate named Christie to its second charge; Ralph Erskine and his congregation held out successfully for James Wardlaw, a more

17 Sefton, "Moderates", 2; Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church*, 62-63.  
18 H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 1st edn., 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1886-1871), II, ii, 679.

19 P. Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant*, 2 vols. (London, 1901), i, 291.

20 "Sketches of my own Birth".

21 D. Beveridge, *Culross and Tulliallan*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1885), i, 233; ii, 66; Wodrow, *Analecta*, ii, 306; Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant*, i, 291.



popular choice.<sup>22</sup> Notwithstanding the intervention of Sir James, Charles Moore was ostensibly called *de jure devoluto*,<sup>23</sup> that is, the presbytery exercising its legal prerogative in lieu of a duly processed presentation from a patron within six months of an announced vacancy. On 27 March, the kirk session of Culross duly recorded that a "very cordial and harmonious call and invitation was given to Mr Charles Muir, preacher of the Gospel at Edinburgh, to be Minister of this parish in the room of Mr George Mair, and the said call being signed by all concerned who were present and attested by the foresaid commissioners of the presbyterie. . . ." Colonel Erskine and James Cuthbert were directed to present the call to Moore at once and advise him to prepare his exercise and addition for the next meeting of the presbytery on 4 April.

His trials for ordination were conducted with some haste; the stated reason was his colleague's rapidly failing health. When he had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the presbytery his competence in languages, textual explication, and preaching, he was appointed to be ordained on Tuesday, 10 May, and to be received at Culross by Baillie Hunter in the name of the heritors, John Halkerston, the town clerk, in the name of the burgh, Patrick Sands for the elders, and Baillie Robert Adam for the community at large. In other words, this appeared to be a truly cordial and harmonious call with the full approbation of all parties. Then follows in the minutes of presbytery a peculiar statement:

"The presbytrie considering the circumstances of the vacancie of Culross do for Mr Muirs encouragement declare that in case that the parish of Culross do not secure him in peaceable possession of Eight hundred merks [£44 9s.] and a convenient Manse against Whitsunday come a year viz. 1716 that then in that case Mr Muir shall have his liberty to accept a Call from any other place after that time."

There was trouble, then, with the "cordial and harmonious call" to Charles Moore. The presbytery, exercising the patron's lapsed prerogative, had chosen a minister whom some influential heritors, in spite of what appears to be a positive consensus, did not want. This suggests that the frequently mentioned "harmony" of a parish's call was a convention and not valid in every case. Erskine of Carnock and other heritors were objecting either to the presbytery's legal prerogative as provided by the act of 1712, and they may have guessed that Moore was not the presbytery's free choice but a nomination from a source outside. Therefore, although Moore was ordained, some of the heritors who had

22 A. R. MacEwen, *The Erskines* (London, 1900), 45.

23 *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 2nd edn., 8 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915-1950), v, 19.

balked at his nomination announced their intention to withhold his salary and perquisites, as the presbytery had anticipated.<sup>24</sup> Thus the minister was served his edict on 8 May: "Conform to his appointment the same was called three times at the most patent door of the Church, there was no objection made against the life and doctrine of the said Mr Muir". Then came forth John Erskine of Balgownie and other heritors objecting (it is so recorded) not to Charles Moore but to the manner in which he was chosen, maintaining that notwithstanding the delay in filling the vacancy, the option to nominate still remained with the heritors in principle, for which reason the new minister could not expect any benefits or financial settlement. The ailing Cuthbert protested at this and argued against any further irregular reaction, adding that the heritors did not have sole right to withhold the benefice since others also contributed. He did not prevail.<sup>25</sup> Under these uneasy conditions, then, Charles Moore assumed his duties as associate minister at Culross with the evangelical James Cuthbert, a man he differed with in doctrine, manner, and style.

John Moore was just seven when his father died; consequently he remembered very little of him. "He was a tall man, of a Pale complexion, of a pleasing Mild Countenance and remarkable genteel in his Manners" — much like other students of Hamilton. He was also remembered in his family as "an earnest and vigorous expounder of the sacred volume"<sup>26</sup> although his manner and speech, at a time when to preach and pray with zeal, spontaneity, and inspiration was the most select attribute of a gospel minister, may have struck his parishioners as less than ideal.

24 Even the popular George Mair did not draw his salary apparently until November 1712 (SRO, CH2/105/4, Dunfermline Presbytery Records, 287), and Colonel Erskine was the problem. In his younger years Erskine had been a student of Witsius in Leyden while in exile; he also served with the Earl of Argyll. From 1712 to 1720 he was frequently in London on behalf of the Church of Scotland and its resistance to patronage; so opposed was he to this erastian settlement that he declined to exercise his rights as patron in other parishes. Moreover, "Black" John was notorious for his litigious disposition, as one historian termed it: he was said to be involved in some form of legal action from 1700 to the day of his death, and in his final illness expressed the fear that his son John, a more compromising sort of advocate, would settle away all that the older man had fought in the courts so long for. (Young John Erskine later was the author of the *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*.) At the time of his dispute with the Culross session over Charles Moore's salary, he was contesting the burgh for the coal rights to the town moor. He was related to the Mures of Caldwell by his first marriage, so Moore may have known him before Culross.

25 SRO, CH2/105/4, Dunfermline Presbytery Records, 337, 348-65, *passim*; SRO, CH2/77/8, Culross Kirk Session Records, 4-13, *passim*. John Anderson, of the North-West Church in Glasgow, had a struggle to be settled in 1717, called by the people but opposed by the other ministers. He had formerly been tutor to the Duke of Argyll (A. Ian Dunlop, "The General Session, a Controversy of 1720", *ante*, xiii (1959), 227).

26 "Sketches of my own Birth"; Rogers, *The Book of Robert Burns*, ii, 84.



On 1 October Cuthbert died, so for the next year or more the man whose call and ordination some of the heritors had vigorously contested now served as their sole minister — and probably had done so since the preceding summer when Cuthbert had been seriously ill. All this time, Moore worked without pay. He may have been carried by other heritors like Lady Blairhall, or by Sir James Campbell; the evidence of his charity later at Stirling as well as his portion of his marriage contract, however, suggests that he may have had sufficient means to maintain himself until this question was resolved.<sup>27</sup>

Nothing was done about the vacant first charge until late the following May when the Culross session decided to call Allan Logan, a notorious persecutor of witches, from nearby Torryburn<sup>28</sup> Logan refused the call and held out against translation (while Moore carried the church himself) until the General Assembly moved Logan one year later. Then the only matter before the little parish was the second minister's salary. It still had not been paid. The minutes of the Culross session for 14 July record that "the presbytery think it lies wholly upon the parish of Culross to make effectual the promises made to Mr Moore at his settlement and desired the Session of Culross to use all their endeavours to that effect". Later that month certain heritors, including Erskine of Balgownie, told the session that they were quite willing "to advance the principall sums against Lambass next and offered in their own name and in name of the rest of the heritors to redeem that annuity by paying of the principall sums" — provided that anyone could find the bond that stated what they had formerly promised. (Erskine of Carnock must have made sure there was nothing on paper to start with.) Logan, speaking for his embarrassed colleagues, protested at this temporizing, stating that what was promised should be paid — and referred the touchy matter back to the presbytery.<sup>29</sup>

Neither kirk session nor presbytery refers to the unpaid stipend until 22 January, 1718. By this time Sir James Campbell had approached his superior, wheels had begun to turn, and Moore must have known then that he was moving on.<sup>30</sup>

On that day appeared James Christie, provost of Stirling, with

27 The testament and inventory of debts of Charles Moore (SRO, CC21/6/32). For the marriage contract, see SRO, B66/8/17, Stirling Burgh and Council Records.

28 It is curious that Moore was absent when the session issued this call after hearing a letter from Lady Blairhall, a heritor, "showing her inclination to have the vacancie supplied by the Reverend Mr Moor our present Minister", but nothing came of this. Moore did not return until 10 July.

29 SRO, CH2/105/4, Dunfermline Presbytery Records, 361-94, *passim*; SRO, CH2/77/8, Culross Kirk Session Records, 27-55, *passim*.

30 According to his son, Moore also achieved the call to Stirling with the assistance of Sir James Campbell ("Sketches of my own Birth").

other dignitaries to present a call to Charles Moore from the Church of the Holy Rude. Culross took this motion back to the kirk session on the following Saturday. As the latter body judged this a "business of moment and the concernment of the whole of the people of this parish", they scheduled a public meeting for 31 January. The consensus of the open meeting was to fight the call at the next convening of the presbytery on 19 February.

The provost returned that day with the Reverend James Brisbane, the dean of guild, various baillies, and several other officials from Stirling to prosecute this call. Dunfermline Presbytery was so impressed with the size and membership of this delegation that it put off even the reading of the minutes until the guests were heard. The commissions were read and placed on the table; everything seemed in order. But others appeared on behalf of the town and congregation of Culross to protest at the translation, among them the town clerk with a letter from Lady Blairhall. The minutes record that "the Pursuers of the Call craved that it might be marked that none of the Heritors of Culross nor any from them appear in this affair except the Lady Blairhall by the above Commission". The delegation from Culross then argued so warmly for their interests that the provost of Stirling felt obliged to pull rank, so to speak, and produce a letter from John, Duke of Argyll, "bearing his Graces respect to the Church of Scotland and readiness to serve her interests and craving that his Presbytery would comply with the Request of the Town of Stirling to have Mr Moor settled at Stirling. . . ." Then all parties spoke their mind about this, including Allan Logan and Moore.

This development is a clear example of the increasing influence in Scottish local affairs of the Duke of Argyll and his brother Lord Islay. Heretofore patronage "was exercised with considerable respect for popular opinion",<sup>31</sup> which was, at this state in the evolution of the church, often Evangelical or reactionary; but this sensitivity diminished as the duke withdrew from military life. It is also worth noting that during the "killing times", from 1670 to 1690, the house of Argyll (and most notable the eighth earl of Argyll) strongly supported the Church of Scotland in distress, the Evangelicals in particular, and fought expressly for them; but some 40 years later the religious zeal of this powerful presbyterian family had shifted away from that wing of the church, which it had so nobly upheld, to support the other side.<sup>32</sup>

31 A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church*, 39-40.

32 William Hamilton once told Robert Wodrow that he questioned the Duke of Argyll in 1717 or the following year about patronage, and the duke answered that "he was sure of having his inclinations followed in all his parishes, whether he was Patron or not; but, he was of opinion, Patronage was a civil right, and a point of property, which he would never give up; and if it wer

The minutes state next that the Reverend James Hog, minister at Carnock, another well-known Evangelical, "prayed for Light and direction in this weighty affair at the desire of the Presbytery", after which the room was cleared for an executive session. Then the presbytery's motion of 27 April, 1715 "that Mr Moor should have the Liberty to accept of a Call from any other place in case he were not against Whitsunday one thousand seven hundred and sixteen secured in the peaceable possession of eight hundred merks of stipend and a convenient manse" was raised, "and that the said Condition is not fulfilled did put it to the vote". The decision of the presbytery was unanimous to release Moore to Stirling "notwithstanding of their endeared affection to their Reverend Brother Mr Charles Moor [the minutes were so composed] and loathness to part with him yet considering the preponderating Reasons for the Transportation [in] his Grace the Duke of Argyles letter . . ." they had to yield.<sup>33</sup>

If Moore believed his new appointment would be less controversial than his last, he was soon set right; this transfer created problems that eventually resulted in the first major secession from the church, led by Ebenezer Erskine in 1733. It has already been seen that indirect political influence cost Moore three years' salary, but apparently he weathered that. At Culross he seems to have had the support of his congregation, who expressed their sorrow at losing him. The situation was different at Stirling; neither his presentation nor his preaching was fully suitable to all who worshipped in the old kirk of the martyr James Guthrie, which, after Guthrie's death, had become well-known for its popular and Evangelical ministers.<sup>34</sup> This preference grew in strength throughout Moore's tenure and culminated in Erskine's drawing off a small but courageous portion of the burgh's congregation. Resentment of patronage, of remoter sources of political leverage, and of the Moderate or "legalistic" line of preaching that followed such political power expressed itself in a rebirth of inspired gospel preaching, field communions, and a general religious fervour reminiscent of the Covenanting period (which many, in pulpit and congregation, still recalled with admiration) in which congregations not only insisted on choosing their own ministers, as the heritors in Culross wished to do, but in choosing specifically those who preached the gospel literally while stressing man's depravity, the need for faith, and God's infinite grace. Any doctrine more sanguine and less demanding could move a congregation and its elders, accustomed to a more

endeavoured to be wrested out of his hands, he would oppose it with all his power. The same was Isla's answer. . . ." (*Analecta*, iv, 246).

33 SRO, CH2/105/5, Dunfermline Presbytery Records, 5-13; SRO, CH2/77/8, Culross Kirk Session Records, 64-65.

34 MacEwen, *The Erskines*, 40.



reactionary line, to voice their protest. Thus there were already two definite schools of preaching and politics in the early eighteenth-century church, and the rift between them led ultimately to schism. Charles Moore's presence at Stirling led eventually to this schism.

The controversy over Moore's translation to Stirling began late in 1717 while he was still at Culross; the burgh was still trying to fill its second charge after unsuccessfully trying to move Robert Wodrow from Eastwood earlier that year. Some of the politicking for the new candidate is ruefully marked in the diary of Colonel John Blackadder (1664-1729), commander of the garrison at the castle.<sup>35</sup> Son of the Covenanting leader, the colonel was distinguished for his humble piety and his taste for the popular style of preaching, so his reflections on the replacement should be read in that light.

At the meeting to fill the vacancy, called for 19 December, Blackadder gradually became aware that the nomination of candidates, theoretically in the hands of the town council of a royal burgh like Stirling — was already foregone; nevertheless, he thought it his duty to "discharge his conscience" on the touchy matter and besought those in attendance to "lay by all prejudice and cordially join together in calling a faithful Gospel Minister. . . . And it is much the interest of this town, at this time when people are so ready to be led into parties, to have a man of a healing, quiet temper. . . ." Next month Blackadder wrote:<sup>36</sup>

"Hearing sermon on the occasion of moderating a call for our minister, I came to church with a peaceable, calm temper, to go along with the call, though I have been passive all the while. I complained, however, that I had but little opportunity of being acquainted with Mr M. I had heard him preach, but know little either as to his ministerial or prudential qualifications, to say whether he be fit for this place or not; and the town of Stirling know as little. . . . However, he got a very harmonious and unanimous call. I thought it better to show the meekness of a Christian temper, and signed the call with the Session. I hope it is a good choice, though rashly gone into."

Moore subsequently appeared before the Presbytery of Stirling on 5 March, and the translation was completed. When Brisbane later that month served Moore's edict and called "at the most patent door of the Church, if there was any to object against Mr Charles Muirs being admitted Minister in Stirling, and if such, they may appear, and give in their objections instantly", Colonel

35 For an account of his exemplary life, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

36 *The Life and Diary of Lieut-Col. J. Blackadder*, ed. A. Crichton (Edinburgh, 1824), 493-94.

Blackadder and others of his mind kept their peace. After a sermon by Alexander Hamilton of Airth, Moore was admitted accordingly, and the burgh council welcomed the candidate of the Duke of Argyll with a costly entertainment.<sup>37</sup>

In 1721 and 1722 Moore was wholly involved with the Marrow Controversy as a member of the Commission of the General Assembly. During the sessions of Commission, Moore cast the famous lone vote against the overture to condemn those few who had endorsed *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*.<sup>38</sup> His action, however, has always been interpreted in a different light from that now offered.

Both the earliest edition of Hew Scott's *Fasti* and Moore's great-grandson John Carrick Moore of Corsewall are responsible for the notion that Charles Moore was a Marrow-man, a member of the popular party of the church. This is based on their interpretation of his opposition to the trials of Erskine, Boston, and Hog. Neither Carrick Moore nor Hew Scott seemed aware of Moore's training under Hamilton, nor did they know of his political involvement with the house of Argyll. Moore was scarcely sympathetic with the defiance of the Marrowmen, although his mildness and friendship toward them may have misled them. Planning his strategy early in 1722, Boston remarked, "Messrs Hamilton at Airth, Brisbane and Muir at Stirling, and Warden at Gargunnock though invited, came not, to our great discouragement".<sup>39</sup> Moore did not wish to belong to their dissent, nor did more sympathetic men like Alexander Hamilton, who had been examined on his doctrine in 1720 before the Commission. On the other hand, Moore resented the censure of *The Marrow* in 1720 and eagerly worked the following year to have it overturned in Commission. During that spring he and others tried to rush material into print against the act of censure of the preceding year, prompting Warden of Gargunnock to write to Wodrow: "Truly they run so fast, especially Mr M. at Stirling, that I believe it shall not be in my power to keep within the sight of them".<sup>40</sup> Rather than join publicly with the representers, he worked to rescind the act and declined to vote in their general censure much as William Hamilton declined to prosecute John Glass and John Simson.

In June, 1725 James Brisbane died; six months later the kirk session called Hamilton of Airth, a popular choice, to be their first minister. The following year Moore married Marion

37 *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, A.D. 1519-1752*, ed. Robert Renwick, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1887-1889), ii, 355.

38 *Fasti*, 2nd edn., iv, 325.

39 *Memoirs of the Life, Time, and Writings of the Reverend and Learned Thomas Boston, A.M.*, ed. G. H. Morrison (Edinburgh, 1889), 356.

40 "An Account of the Controversy respecting the Marrow of Modern Divinity", *Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, 30 (1831), 696n.

Anderson (1705-1778), a young and particularly devout woman from a prominent family in Glasgow. Children soon followed; the eldest surviving son was John, born on 7 December, 1729.<sup>41</sup>

The last major political ordeal for Moore was the difficulty Stirling and the whole Church of Scotland had with Ebenezer Erskine over patronage. That Erskine was able to begin his crusade at Stirling may have been partly due to Moore's dubious popularity as a preacher. Stirling certainly had a good supply of ministers in the 1720s. Colonel Blackadder noted in his diary:<sup>42</sup>

"We have four exercises here on the Sabbath, and we had four different ministers; some expressing things one way, some another; yea, in seeming opposition to one another. These views, I confess, stumble me. Some that are called legal preachers, are blamed for leaning too much to the Arminian side; while others that call themselves evangelical, perhaps go too far to the Antinomian side. Lord, teach me thyself, for I dare not trust implicitly to any man."

At this time the congregation of Stirling met for both Sabbath services in the "East Church" of the ancient edifice of the Holy Rude; this was the choir of the old church which, since James Guthrie's time, has been separated from the nave by a wall of masonry, dividing the use of the building with Guthrie's rival, Matthias Symson. After Guthrie's execution, Symson moved into the choir. The nave was no longer used, and the old west and north doors were closed up. Worshippers entered through the more modest south door and walked the length of the empty nave to the "inner" or "east kirk".<sup>43</sup>

In the middle of the seventeenth century the choir apparently

41 Marion Anderson was one of two daughters of John Anderson, younger of Dowhill (1636-1710), and his second wife Marion Hay. The tocher the daughters divided consisted of 19 acres of the Dowhill property east of the Glasgow Gallowgate, many "lands" in the city proper, and other items, as well as £3,000 each. John Moore wrote of his mother years after her death: "She was a Woman Naturally of a Strong Character, of great dignity of Manner, of a Considerable share of elevation of Mind. No consideration of interest or conveniency Could make her stop to any word or action she thought unbecoming. She was endowed with a good understanding and a very considerable Share of humour, which however she checked as she did the natural gayety of her disposition, from Sentiments of a gloomy devotion with which she was Siezed at the age of 21 [1726?] and which continued during her whole life — which yet was not able to efface the genuine benevolence and generosity of her disposition."

The match with Charles Moore displeased her family, probably because of the differences in age, health, and fortune (Moore brought £500), but she often told her son that "the Seven years during which she lived with him was as happily passed as she would imagine was possible in this life" ("Sketches of my own Birth").

42 *Life and Diary*, 500. Blackadder made frequent references to the inconsistent preaching after Moore's arrival but avoided mentioning names.

43 W. D. Simpson, *The Church of the Holy Rude, Stirling* (Stirling, 1967), 23.



held the faithful of Stirling with comfort; by 1720, however, the population had increased, and not only were the services uncomfortably congested, but the spiritual needs of the congregation were proving too much for two middle-aged ministers to handle. In early November 1730, the town council, after hearing petitions anent the crowded conditions at worship, decided to offer each minister 300 merks above his annual salary if each would begin preaching twice each Sunday rather than divide duties each service. This was not an attractive proposal to either Hamilton or Moore and, after consultation with the session and presbytery, they chose to turn it down, Hamilton declaring that "he could not understand or accept of what thereby offered him in regaird of his being ane old and infirm man", and Moore adding "that tho' he were never so strong he did not see he could accept because the opinion of the session and the matter of the petitions were mostly for a third minister".<sup>44</sup> Moore was referring to the legacy of the late Colonel Blackadder expressly to augment the salary of a third minister, to which his widow had added more in the hopes of attracting Ebenezer Erskine from Portmoak. This popular plan produced a conflict between town and the present ministers. "The Magistrates and town are for a third minister", Wodrow reported, "and Coll. Blackadder's lady hath given somewhat to be a fund for it. The Ministers are not for this . . . and Mr Muir gave the Magistrates hard words, and called them 'Michaelmass Lairds'", alluding both to their willingness in their brief term of office to be easily swayed. "The veu is to call Mr Ebenezer Erskine from Portmoak thither; and the Ministers and Presbytery are against him, as being one of the Representers [of *The Marrow*]"'.<sup>45</sup> The burgh had its way, and Erskine was called.

Erskine's move to Stirling must have caught everyone by surprise. For 28 years he had resisted calls, but the burgh offered him £66, half as much again as the usual stipend. Thus it could congratulate itself for having attracted such a famous name to its kirk although Erskine, too, was middle-aged. The choice of Erskine would usually indicate a desire to increase attendance, but this was scarcely Stirling's problem. A number of reasons have been put forth as to why Erskine came to Stirling — his new wife wished to live in a county town; he was looking for a better situation from which to launch his attack on patronage; he wished to share a ministry with Alexander Hamilton.<sup>46</sup> But Stirling most likely called him to "replace" one of their ministers with a more popular choice, to acquire in a third minister the preaching they

44 *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling*, ii, 210-14.

45 Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 198, 226.

46 MacEwen, *The Erskines*, 40; and Donald Fraser, *The Life and Diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1831), 330.

did not enjoy in the second, and to offset the resentment they must have felt in a man with such strong political affiliations.<sup>47</sup>

Between Erskine's call and his secession the presbytery minutes record repeated friction between Moore and the authorities over the heavy schedule of services, which, he felt, exceeded the terms under which he was hired. Within two years of his call Erskine had taken over the huge old nave of the church and was drawing the largest crowds. Thus, Hamilton and Moore were no better off than before their brother was called — sharing the other services between them.<sup>48</sup> Division of responsibilities among ministers soon became academic, however, as Erskine and the Established church drifted apart over the question of patronage and freedom of speech in the pulpit. When it became apparent that the newly formed Associate Presbytery would not be reconciled to the parent church, relations between Erskine and other figures became very strained. Hamilton continued to maintain contact with the rebel;<sup>49</sup> Moore turned his attention to politics. In December, 1734, writing to Captain Charles Campbell,<sup>50</sup> Moore complained first that his failing health would not permit him to come to Edinburgh that winter to meet with Lord Islay's man of business there, Lord Milton, and then gloated over the recent defeat of the "Squadrone" Whigs in that year's later election:<sup>51</sup>

"It's very good news that the patriots [the Squadrone candidates] have their Languages confounded; may the Good Lord write disorders and disappointment upon every measure tending to Sapp the foundations of what's dear to us men and Christians. I doe what I am capable to open the Eyes of our misled people that they may not emplicitely given [*sic*] in to the perpetual pernicious preachings of Such as leave noe Stone unturnd to inflame this poor place nay the nation that they themselves have the Helm to Stear it to its ruin."

During this distressing period, the minister also spent much time with Sir James Campbell. Young John particularly recalled several times riding with his father up to Lawers to watch the exercises of the Scots Greys.<sup>52</sup> But his father's health, always frail, declined sharply after Erskine's formal secession. He carried out less of his

47 Neither burgh nor presbytery minutes shows any interference from the Duke of Argyll while Erskine's call was under consideration.

48 SRO, CH2/722/12, Stirling Presbytery Records, 98ff.

49 Fraser, *The Life and Diary of Ebenezer Erskine*, 342.

50 Charles Campbell, (c. 1695-1741) of Auchnacrieve, first cousin to the Duke of Argyll, was captain to the 15th Foot Guards and M.P. for Argyllshire in 1736. (R. Sedgewick, *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, 2 vols. (New York, 1970). i, 520.)

51 National Library of Scotland, MSS., SC58/14.

52 "Sketches of my own Birth".

duties after the winter of 1735, missing every meeting of presbytery in 1736 until September; after which he made every meeting until his death in late November. His body was laid to rest next to James Brisbane's.<sup>53</sup>

This brief account of the major events of Charles Moore's career is designed to add another candidate to the recent list of early Moderate ministers taught by William Hamilton, and by illustrating the assistance one received from a solid political base, to show the kinds of difficulties a Moderate had to face. One is entitled to mixed views about his career. Charles Moore seems to have been a tolerant, patient, and well-meaning man when his church needed such virtues; on the other hand, he was probably not the most competent and resourceful minister, and was able to finish out his ministry at Stirling perhaps only because Clan Campbell exerted influence as a personal favour. His friendships seemed stronger outside his parish than within. As an early Moderate minister, Moore was popular with only a section of his parishioners, and for these reasons he must have led a very frustrating life.

53 New Register House, OPR. 490/5, Old Parochial Records, County of Stirling.



